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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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CZECHOSLOVAK-AUSTRIAN FRONTIER:  
HISTORICAL SURVEY, 1918-1939I. DESCRIPTION OF THE  
FRONTIER AREA1. Area

The area involved is located on the Czechoslovak side of the 1937 frontier, in Southern Bohemia and Moravia, and comprises the political districts of Kaplice, Třeboň, Hradec Jindřichuv in Southern Bohemia, and Dačice, Budějovice Moravské, Znojmo and Mikulov in Moravia. The total area of these frontier districts is about 2,160 square miles (5,589 square kilometers).

2. Population

The population of these districts, according to the Czechoslovak census of 1930, is shown in the following table (All starred districts (\*) are directly on the frontiers. Underlined districts are political districts; others are administrative or judicial districts):

TABLE I

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TABLE I

District	Area	Total	Germans		Czechoslovaks	
	sq. km.	Population	Number	%	Number	%
Kaplice* (Kaplitz)	933	50,284	44,281	88.06	5,953	11.84
Brod Vyšší* (Hohenfurth)	324	18,435	17,453	94.67	968	5.25
Hradý Nové* (Gratzen)	259	14,332	12,300	85.82	2,017	14.07
Kaplice* (Kaplitz)	350	17,517	14,528	82.94	2,968	16.95
Třeboň* (Wittingau)	892	55,690	2,037	3.66	53,550	96.16
Lomnice (Lomnitz)	200	9,593	18	.19	9,568	99.74
Třeboň* (Gmünd)	463	30,522	1,978	6.48	28,485	93.33
Veselí (Weseli)	229	15,575	41	.26	15,497	99.50
Hradec Jindřichuv* (Neuhaus)	711	46,818	17,316	36.98	29,419	62.84
Hradec Jindřichuv	504	35,708	7,536	21.10	28,102	78.70
Bystrice Nová* (Neubistritz)	207	11,110	9,780	88.03	1,317	11.85
Dačice* (Datschitz)	809	46,634	7,068	15.16	39,477	84.65
Dačice	204	11,876	210	1.77	11,635	97.97
Slavonice* (Zlabings)	195	9,275	6,753	72.81	2,506	27.02
Telc	410	25,483	105	.41	25,336	99.42
Budejovice Moravské* (Mährisch Budwitz)	661	40,308	2,633	6.53	37,551	93.16
Budejovice Moravské	399	26,140	162	.62	25,935	99.22
Jemnice* (Jamnitz)	262	14,168	2,471	17.44	11,616	81.99
Znojmo* (Znaim)	1,020	103,125	62,156	60.27	40,134	38.92
Jaroslavice* (Joslowitz)	272	26,314	23,780	90.37	2,501	9.51
Vranov* (Frain)	218	10,365	6,915	66.71	3,398	32.78
Znojmo*	530	66,446	31,461	47.35	34,235	51.52
Mikulov* (Nikolsburg)	563	53,563	42,107	78.61	9,154	17.09
Mikulov* (Feldsberg)	373	36,948	30,442	82.39	4,421	11.97
Pohořelice (Pohrlitz)	190	16,615	11,665	70.20	4,733	28.48
Totals	5,589	396,222	177,600	44.32	201,417	51.80

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In the administrative sub-districts directly touching the frontier (Brod Vyšší, Hradý Nové, Kaplice, Třeboň, Bystřice Nová, Slavonice, Jemnice, Jaroslavice, Vranov, Znojmo, and Mikulov), which cover an area of 3,448 square kilometers (1,331 square miles), there are 157,861 Germans (59.32 percent), and 94,232 Czechoslovaks (39.56 percent), in a total population of 255,432.

### 3. Topography

The primary topographic importance of these frontier regions arises from the elevation of the Southern Böhmerwald (Šumava), which is about seventy-eight miles in length. In the district of Kaplice it has an average elevation of more than 1,000 meters, or about 3,200 feet. The land slopes toward the Lužnice River, an affluent of the Vltava (Moldau), in a valley of about 500 meters (1,640 feet) elevation. The region of Gmünd City is at a similar elevation. The Bohemian-Moravian Highlands, which penetrate into the district of Hradec Jindřichuv, have an elevation of from 1,500 to 2,000 feet. In Dačice, however, the elevation is only about 1,050 feet. In Znojmo it rises to about 1,300 feet, and near Mikulov (Nikolsburg City) the elevation rises to about 1,800 feet and diminishes toward the valley of the Morava (March) River, which drains practically all the rivers of Moravia.

### 4. Communications

There were nine international railway stations along the 1937 Austro-Czechoslovak frontier: Horní Dvořiště, České Velenice, Slavonice, Šatov, Hrušovany-Šanov, Novosedly-Drnholec, Břeclav, Marchegg, and Kopčany. Prague and Plzen (Pilsen) are connected with Linz, Salzburg and the Adriatic Sea through České Budějovice (Budweis) and the Horní Dvořiště, and with Vienna through České Velenice (near Gmünd). Prague is also connected with Vienna through Znojmo via the Brno-Břeclav route. The Břeclav-Valtice-Znojmo (Lundenburg-Feldsberg-Znaim) railway, running parallel to the 1937 frontier about four hundred meters (1,300 feet) north of it, was an important railway branch. The Břeclav region contains the conjunction of all routes crossing the Moravian Gap,

along

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along the so-called Vienna-Silesian route. The Vltava and the Morava are not genuinely navigable rivers in the regions under discussion, though the Morava might be so considered for smaller river vessels, if regulated. In its lower course it becomes sluggish, with the characteristics of a river of the plain.

## 5. Economy

In the Southern Böhmerwald (Šumava) wood industries and agriculture predominate, while cereals are cultivated in a large belt of land paralleling the Böhmerwald, from Cheb to Gmünd. Southern Bohemia is the paper-making center and in part the brewery of Czechoslovakia. It is also a center of pencil manufacturing and paper mills. In the region of Kaplice starches and cotton goods are produced. Cereals, especially rye and oats, and potatoes are raised in the nearby hills. Much sugar is produced in the valley of the Morava River from Olomouc to the Danube River. In the Dyje valley manufacturing (breweries, distilleries, canneries, tanneries) and agriculture (vegetables, wine) are important. The district of Mikulov (Feldsberg), in Moravia, is also known for textiles and quick-lime.

## II. THE AUSTRIAN-CZECHOSLOVAK BOUNDARY PROBLEM AT THE PARIS CONFERENCE

### 1. The Czechoslovak Frontier Claims of 1919

At the Paris Peace Conference, the Czechoslovak Delegation, with respect to the Austrian-Czechoslovak frontiers, demanded the historic boundaries of Bohemia and Moravia, with minor rectifications in the regions of Gmünd and Mikulov (Feldsberg) ("Mémoire No. 10. Problèmes des Rectifications des frontières tchécoslovaques et Germano-Autrichiennes", Revue de Droit International, XXII, No. 4, Oct.-Nov.-Dec. 1938, 486-93). The Czechoslovak Delegation asserted that the natural frontier between Moravia and Austria was formed by the watershed of the Chuba and Smeda, direct tributaries of the Danube, and of the tributaries of the Dyje River and the lower Morava River. Thence, beginning at Korneuberg, it ran

along

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along the course of the Dahube. All the territory to the north of this line, it was claimed, was impregnated with a Czech element and its work. For ethnic and economic reasons, the Czechs also claimed a small rectification in the Dyje valley west of Znojmo (Znaim), leaving Hradek (Hardegg), Merkersdorf, and the castle of Karlslust in Moravia. For the purpose of rounding out its frontiers, and for ethnic and economic reasons, the Czechs also demanded the Gmünd (Třeboň) region, and for economic and strategic reasons they demanded a rectification of the Austrian-Bohemian frontier in the region of the upper Vltava (Moldau) River.

## 2. Recommendations of the Commission on Czechoslovak Affairs

As early as February 27, 1919 the Commission on Czechoslovak Affairs accepted the principle of preserving the 1914 frontiers of Bohemia and Moravia, subject to such minor rectifications as might seem desirable. After a number of meetings, on May 9 the Commission unanimously recommended that the town of Gmünd be given to Austria, while the railway station of Gmünd, about two miles from the town itself, should be assigned to Czechoslovakia; the station formed an important junction for southern Bohemia, where the two great Czechoslovak lines from Prague via Tábor to Gmünd, and from Plzen (Pilsen) via České Budějovice, meet (Miller Diary, XVI, 234-35). Moreover, the Commission thought it of great importance that Czechoslovakia should control the course of the Morava River in order to be able to construct canals to serve Moravia. Therefore, it recommended that the frontier be drawn at the town of Feldsberg (Valtice), at the confluence of the Thaya and Morava rivers, so as to leave the Morava entirely in Czechoslovakia. The railway which followed the Morava River at varying distances was to be left within Austria, since it was necessary in the Austrian system of communications with Vienna. Thus, in the regions of Gmünd and Feldsberg, two small pieces of Austrian territory were assigned to Czechoslovakia.

At the meeting of the Council of Ten on May 12, 1919 there were no objections to these deviations from the old administrative frontiers. At a later meeting on July 11, Secretary of State Lansing expressed approval that the

deviations

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deviations from the old Austro-Bohemian-Moravian boundary line had been confined to the regions of Gmünd and Feldsberg (Miller Diary, XVI, 272; Almond and Lutz, The Treaty of St. Germain: A Documentary History, Standord University Press, 1935, 467).

### 3. Austrian Protests

The government of the new Austrian Republic protested vigorously against these cessions, as well as against the inclusion of the Sudetan German regions as a whole in Czechoslovakia. The Austrians claimed that, according to the census of 1910, the regions of Southern Bohemia bordering on Lower and Upper Austria were inhabited by a German population, with 197,918 Germans; compared with 7,359 Czechs, while the southern part of Moravia, along the Austrian border, had 159,263 Germans and only 11,249 Czechoslovaks (the 1930 census indicated a much higher percentage of Czechoslovaks in both areas). They, therefore, proposed that a plebiscite be held in all the disputed districts (see especially the Austrian counter-proposals of July 10, 1919; Almond and Lutz, op. cit., 299-309).

### 4. The Reply of the Allied and Associated Powers

In a reply of September 2, 1919 (Ibid., pp. 225-31, 470-71), the Allied and Associated Powers stated that they had tried to determine the boundaries of the states issuing from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy "with an equity bound to give Central Europe a durable peace", and had deviated from the historic boundaries in Southern Bohemia and Moravia in only two cases of secondary importance, where the economic interests of one of the new states appeared to prevail over the claims of the Austrian Republic. They had endeavored

to insure to the Czecho-Slovak State a complete system of ways of communication. In doing so, they had to overstep slightly the historic frontier at two points; namely, in the region of the Thaya, in order to include in the Czechoslovak territory the line Lundenburg-Feldsberg-Znaim /Břeclav-Valtice-Znojmo/, necessary for the west to east communications of southern Moravia, and in the region of Gmünd, in order to effect

in

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in Bohemia the junction of two trunk lines which run almost wholly through the said province, namely, the line of Prague through Tábor, and that of Pilsen through Budweis /České Budějovice/.

5. The Treaty of  
St. Germain (September 10,  
1919)

Article 27 of the Treaty of St. Germain (Ibid., pp. 131-32, Section 6, Article 27) defined the frontiers of Austria with Czechoslovakia, which began at the "point common to the three frontiers of Austria, Hungary and the Czecho-Slovak State", and then proceeded as follows from that point:

a line to be fixed on the ground following as much as possible the old frontier of 1867 between Austria and Hungary;

thence westwards to the confluence of the Morava (March) with the Danube;

the principal channel of navigation of the Danube;

thence the course of the Morava upstream, then the course of the Thaya upstream to a point to be selected about 2 kilometers south-east of the intersection of the Rabensburg-Themenau road with the Rabensburg-Lundenburg railway;

thence west-north-westwards to a point on the old administrative boundary between lower Austria and Moravia situated about 400 meters south of the point where this boundary cuts the Nikolsburg-Feldsberg railway...;

thence west-north-westwards the above mentioned administrative boundary....

From Moravia into southern Bohemia the line followed the old administrative boundary line between Lower Austria and Bohemia, to a point about 5 kilometers north-west of Gmünd, and then proceeded as follows:

a line to be fixed on the ground passing east of the Rottenschachen-Zugger road...;

thence

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thence southwards and then west-north-westwards to a point on the old administrative boundary between Lower Austria and Bohemia situated about 200 meters north of the point where it cuts the Gratzen-Weitra road;

a line to be fixed on the ground passing between Zuggers and Breitensee, then through the most south-easterly point of the railway bridge over the Lainsitz leaving to Austria the town of Gmünd and to the Czecho-Slovak State the station and railway works of Gmünd (Wolfshof) and the junction of the Gmünd-Budweis and Gmünd-Wittingau railways, then passing through points 524 (Grundhübel), 577 (north of Hohenberg) and 681 (Lagerberg);

thence south-westwards the above mentioned administrative boundary;

then north-westwards the old administrative boundary between Bohemia and Upper Austria to its point of junction with the frontier of Germany.

Essentially, therefore, the only deviations from the old administrative line separating Austria from Bohemia and Moravia were at Gmünd and Feldsberg.

### III. TERRITORIAL ASPECTS OF THE MUNICH SETTLEMENT ON THE FORMER AUSTRIAN-CZECHOSLOVAK FRONTIER

#### 1. Area and Population

Along the Austrian-Czechoslovak borders of Bohemia and Moravia, the lines drawn as a consequence of the Munich Settlement of September 30, 1938 ceded the following regions (2,288 square miles) to Germany (areas and populations involved are estimated on the basis of the 1930 census).

TABLE II



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TABLE II

District	Area sq. km.	Total Population	Germans			Czechoslovaks	
			Number	%		Number	%
Krumlov Český *	1,156	61,870	44,994	72.72		16,780	27.14
Chvalšiny	297	12,967	10,984	84.71		1,982	15.28
Krumlov Český	387	33,343	18,846	56.52		14,421	43.25
Planá Horní*	372	15,560	15,164	97.46		386	2.48
Kaplice*	933	50,284	44,281	88.06		5,953	11.84
Brod Vyšší*	324	18,435	17,453	94.67		968	5.25
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Krumlov Moravský	330	28,671	8,257	28.80		20,286	70.75
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Mikulov*	373	36,948	30,442	82.39		4,421	11.97
Pohorelice	190	16,615	11,665	70.20		4,733	28.48
Hodonín*							
Břeclav*	293	42,976	1,992	4.64		40,056	93.21
Total	5,926	441,872	232,305	55.38		204,398	44.62